

ROM

SUMMER 2024

OpenROM
Building a 21st-century museum

Quilts: Made in Canada
Weaving community, artistry,
and sustainability

Earth: An Immersive Journey
A spectacular voyage across the
planet's ecosystems

volume 56: number 1
2024 summer

HELLO, KITTY

New exhibition
celebrates the
world of cats



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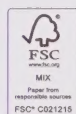
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ROM is home to a world-class
collection of artworks, cultural
objects, and natural history
specimens. Not all of our 18
million objects and specimens
are on display, though many are
featured in our 40 gallery and
exhibition spaces. As you plan
your visit, please note that not
everything within these pages
will be on view in the galleries.

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BUILDING ROM'S FUTURE



In February, after years of careful planning, we were thrilled to announce the launch of OpenROM. This donor-funded initiative, which includes a sweeping architectural reimagining of the Museum's main floor and a fully redesigned Bloor Street entrance, is a true transformation, both literally and figuratively. Catalyzed by a \$50 million gift from the Jay and Barbara Hennick Family Foundation, OpenROM will propel the Museum forward on its journey to becoming an even more thriving cultural and civic hub in the heart of the city.

Construction, which is now well under way, will take three years, and the Museum will remain open throughout. In fact, as this issue makes clear, not only are we staying open, we're ramping up.

Led by Dr. Vicki Kwon, Associate Curator of Korean Art and Culture, we recently installed a stunning new display in our Gallery of Korea about the art and fashion of the Joseon dynasty (1390–1910). One of the newly installed artworks is an early-20th-century, ten-panelled screen titled *Scenes from the Cycle of Life*, which, as Kwon notes later in the magazine, depicts the ways in which fashion demarcates social class through the story of one man's life.

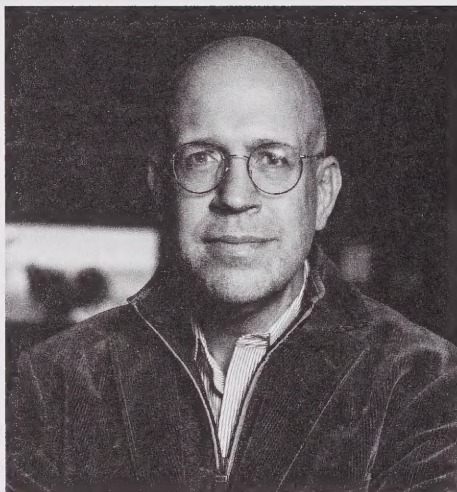
On June 15, we open *Wild Cats*. Hailing from the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle in Paris, France, this transdisciplinary exhibition—with its astounding array of mounted specimens, digital experiences, and diverse artworks—explores the science of these cunning carnivores and their outsized influence on human culture. Then, on June 29, we open the ROM-original exhibition *Quilts: Made in Canada*, an intimate history of more than 150 years of life in Canada written in cotton, thread, and dye.

While our galleries and exhibitions engage visitors, our many experts advance scholarship. Among those experts are five ROM staff who published a landmark paper on blue whales in *Conservation Genetics*, summarized later in this issue. Writing in the *New York Times*, Darren Incorvaia praised the paper as “the most accurate picture to date of the North Atlantic [blue whale] population's structure.” While important in its own right, this paper builds on years of ROM research, which informed 2017's *Out of the Depths: The Blue Whale Story* and 2021's *Great Whales: Up Close and Personal*—proof of how our groundbreaking research shapes our popular exhibitions, one of the hallmarks of a truly great 21st-century museum.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of loops and a final 'S' shape.

Josh Basseches
ROM Director and CEO

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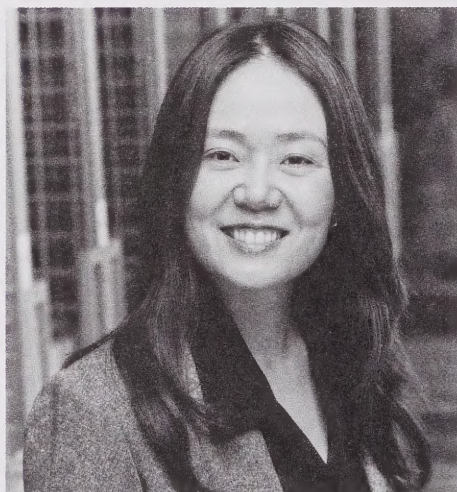
Nathan K. Lujan
Associate Curator, Fishes

Nathan Lujan is an internationally recognized expert on ecology and evolution of the Amazon basin, the most biodiverse freshwater ecosystem on Earth. Nathan's research is especially focused on clarifying the taxonomy, ecological diversity, and evolutionary history of the bizarre, highly diverse catfish suborder Loricarioidei.



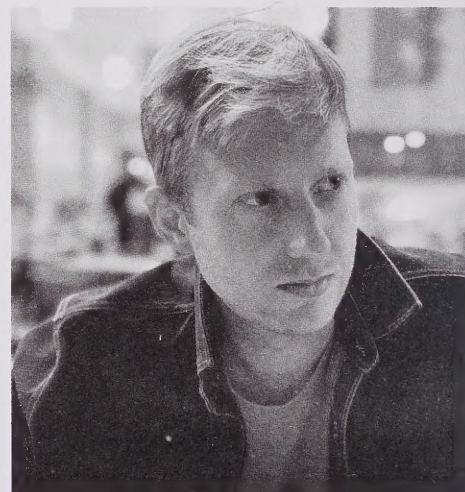
Jennifer Kinnaird
Collection Specialist, European

Jennifer Kinnaird is a collection specialist in the Department of Art & Culture. She is responsible for the long-term preservation, documentation, organization, and care of ROM's diverse European collections, comprising 56,000 works. Over her 17-year career, she has contributed to several exhibitions and permanent galleries, facilitating both intellectual and physical access to the collections.



Vicki Kwon
Associate Curator, Korean Art & Culture

Vicki Sung-yeon Kwon is an art historian and curator. Her research focuses on Korean art and visual culture in relation to global contemporary art, transnationalism, feminist activism, and socially engaged art. At ROM, she oversees Canada's largest collection of Korean art and cultural heritage materials.



Colin J. Fleming
Senior Communications Creative Strategist

A graduate of Columbia University, Colin Fleming collaborates with experts across the Museum to write everything from magazine articles to ad copy.

Member Benefits

Dispatches

From the Field

Behind the Scenes

From the Collections

PART 1

Exclusive Member Preview

Members get free and unlimited access and are among the first to see new special exhibitions. Watch your eNews for details.

Earth: An Immersive Journey

Friday, May 31, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, June 1, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The exhibition content was created by the Sensory Odyssey Studio and co-produced with the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris). Audiovisual production by Mardi8. Original scents by IFF (exclusive international partner for the Sensory Odyssey fragrances).

Wild Cats

Friday, June 14, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Saturday, June 15, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

This exhibition was created by the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, France.

Quilts: Made in Canada

Friday, June 28, 2024
10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.



Patchwork quilt
1840–50
Belleville, Ontario
Cut and pieced
roller-printed
cotton tabby
Gift of Mrs. C.D.
McPherson.

➤ For a list of all Member-related events and programs, visit rom.ca/members/events.

Guild of Immortals

➤ Learn more and register at rom.ca/guild.



Join the Guild of Immortals—an adventure club exclusively for young Members.

Participants receive a handbook filled with fun activities and interesting facts. They can collect stickers in their handbook by completing activities, visiting the Museum, and attending events. Those who complete their handbook will receive a special Guild of Immortals seal and gift to commemorate their accomplishment.

In addition, young Members are invited to special Guild of Immortals events, where they can speak to ROM experts, see real specimens, and participate in fun crafts and activities. Stay tuned for details on our next Guild of Immortals event, happening on Sunday, June 16, 2024.



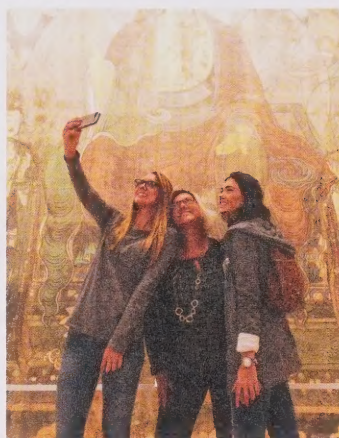
Canadian Museums and Art Galleries

From the Vancouver Art Gallery to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, ROM Members get free or discounted tickets to some of Canada's best galleries and museums.



Learn more at rom.ca/reciprocal.

Events



Member Evening

Enjoy a special night at the Museum, where you can mingle with other Members and learn from our experts. Mark your calendars—the next Member Evening is on July 9, 2024.



Member Tours

Throughout the year, Members have exclusive access to unique and engaging guided tours such as Dynamic Dinosaurs, Royalty at ROM, and more.



Watch your eNews for registration details or visit rom.ca/members/events.

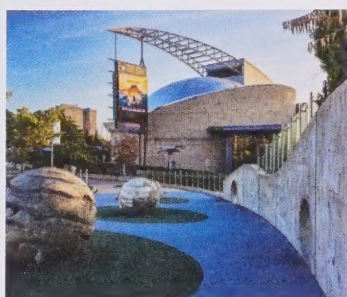
Member Weekends



McMichael Canadian Art Collection
10365 Islington Avenue, Kleinburg, ON
Saturday, July 20, 2024



Aga Khan Museum
77 Wynford Drive, Toronto, ON
Saturday, August 10, 2024
Sunday, August 11, 2024



Ontario Science Centre
770 Don Mills Road, Toronto, ON
Saturday, October 19, 2024
Sunday, October 20, 2024

Save 50% off Ontario Science Centre general admission. Explore the wonders of science and innovation through engaging hands-on exhibits and dynamic live demonstrations.



For a list of all Member-related events and programs, visit rom.ca/members/events.



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You make ROM better.

NEW STUDY SHEDS LIGHT ON BLUE WHALE POPULATIONS



IN MAY 2014, a team of ROM scientists worked with the local communities of Trout River and Rocky Harbour in Newfoundland to recover the remains of two rare blue whales. These animals had washed ashore after nine blue whales died tragically when they were trapped in ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence a month before.

Working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Research Casting International, and the local communities, the ROM team defleshed and recovered the bones of this endangered species, transporting them to Ontario. Since then, scientists have been analyzing the DNA of these whales to gain further insight into their biology, characteristics, and population decline.

A recent study, co-published by the ROM team in the science journal *Conservation Genetics*, discloses the population genetics of the North Atlantic blue whales. By comparing the DNA of the beached whales to samples collected from 26 other blue whales, the study reveals what *The New York Times* called “a ticking time bomb in blue whale demographics, peculiar migration patterns and even clandestine cross-species matings.”

Industrial whaling practices severely impacted whale populations, and blue whales

were hunted to near extinction in the mid-20th century. With huge declines in population figures, rates of inbreeding can go up. With fewer than 3,500 adult blue whales left in the North Atlantic, researchers were expecting to see a genetic bottleneck. The results were surprising: despite aggressive overhunting, blue whales have kept their genetic variation, with strong evidence of intermingling between the eastern and western varieties.

However, if blue whale populations do not grow in the next hundred years, there is worry of the genetic bottleneck developing. A bottleneck would reduce the species' gene pool, increasing the animals' risk of extinction. The scientists plan to sample more blue whale genomes to study the mating and reproduction of blue whales in connection to other species, including cases of intermixing between species. Understanding the whales' genetic diversity and genome structure will be critical to developing conservation strategies for these endangered species.

ROM's Blue Whale Genome Project was generously supported by the Alan and Patricia Koval Foundation.

EARTH: AN IMMERSIVE JOURNEY



Opens June 1, 2024

SLOW DOWN AND EMBRACE the wonders of nature in *Earth: An Immersive Journey*—a multi-sensory voyage through several of our planet's vibrant ecosystems. Colours, sounds, and scents come together in this exhibition, connecting visitors to the diversity of life that calls this planet home. From a lush rainforest to a windswept arctic tundra, a combination of high-definition projections, scent diffusions, and spatial audio takes visitors through Earth's natural environments, creating a one-of-a-kind immersive and sensory experience bursting with plants, animals, fungi, and microbes.

Exhibition content created by the Sensory Odyssey Studio and co-produced with the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris). Audiovisual production by Mardi8. Original scents by IFF (exclusive international partner for the Sensory Odyssey fragrances).

WILD CATS



Opens June 15, 2024

THEY ARE WILD, FEROCIOUS PREDATORS with razor-sharp retractable claws—and they may be in your home. Domestic house cats (*Felis silvestris catus*) are just one of the many felines set to take over ROM when *Wild Cats* opens this summer. Chronicling stories of the 38 current species of cats living today, the exhibition covers their surprising diversity, hunting skill, agility, use in art and culture, and threats to their survival.

Wild Cats presents the amazing variety of cat species that exist around the world, including some impressive but less commonly known felines such as the tiny kodkod (*Leopardus guigna*) from South America and the fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*) from southern Asia. The exhibition delves into the story of cats and scratches the surface on the lore of lions from Africa, jaguars of South America, and prehistoric sabre-toothed cats. Visitors will also encounter the wild cat species that inhabit Ontario, and learn about the features that make all cats incredible predators. In addition to highlighting their natural abilities, the exhibition delves into the deep connection cats of all stripes have had with humans over the centuries, inspiring historical myths and legends and permeating contemporary culture.



This exhibition was created by the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, France.

FORGED IN THE FIELD

ROM's Curator of Fishes on the origins of his 19-year partnership with contemporary artist David Brooks

By Nathan K. Lujan



MARCH 13 2005. I was a third-year PhD student on my fifth expedition to the Guiana Shield, an ancient highland in northern South America that had inspired Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*. On my arrival at the top of Salto de Oso, a major waterfall that interrupts the rainforest-shrouded Rio Siapa as it drains Venezuela's border region with Brazil, my heart sunk. The discovery I hoped to make—a missing link in the 100-million-year history of fishes in northern South America—would remain maddeningly beyond my grasp. The wet season had begun before I expected, and with the rains under-

way, the Siapa was far too deep and turbulent to even consider sampling.

I planned this trip to build on a discovery I had made in 2004 at the top of Salto Tencua, another southern Venezuelan waterfall, where I had found several fish species that were not only new to science but also unrelated to any fishes in the surrounding region. Genetic research would later confirm that their closest relatives lived thousands of kilometres away, implying that over millions of years, the Guiana Shield's slow, intermittent geologic uplift had driven life's diversification by erecting waterfalls that isolated fish

populations. I had hoped that above Salto de Oso, I might find the additional relictual fish species I needed to support my hypothesis.

Feeling defeated, I was unaware that my doomed expedition would soon take a dramatic turn for the better. A few days later, on a rock in the middle of the Casiquiare Canal, I would meet a young contemporary artist who would become one of my most enduring, life-long collaborators.

David Brooks and Nathan Lujan sample the Rio Otongo along the Pacific Coast of Ecuador in 2012.

Born in Brazil, Indiana, in 1975, David Brooks is an artist who, in his own words, “investigates how cultural concerns cannot be divorced from the natural world.”

For practical reasons, I had been trying to recruit my good friend Mike Gangloff, a malacologist and member of my doctoral cohort, to join my trip to Salto de Oso. Preferring to focus on his dissertation, Mike declined and highly recommended David Brooks, an aspiring sculptor, in his stead. As a PhD student immersed in the esoteric minutiae of fish taxonomy, I saw little reason to place such faith in an unknown, untested, and scientifically unskilled artist. But Mike assured me Brooks was an avid naturalist, fisherman, and birder who would do anything, including cover his own expenses, to join me.

With time running out, the list of potential scientific collaborators dwindled, and Brooks rose to the top of my B-team, who would assist the second leg of my expedition, replacing three A-team scientists after they flew out four weeks into the trip. So I gave him a call. If he could arrive at the appropriate time to a small airport in Puerto Ayacucho, he could fly in to meet me on the same small plane I had chartered to extract my A-team.

My 2005 trip had gotten off to a stressful, depressing start. The weather was cool and rainy, the blackflies were relentless, the team lacked cohesion, and fishes were scarce. When fishing is good, arduous field conditions are easy to endure, but when fishing is bad, those same conditions can be soul-crushing—and I felt responsible for it all.

After we returned downriver from Salto de Oso, my A-team departed down the Casiquiare. The crew that remained had little to do but listlessly swat blackflies and reorganize gear while listening for the distant outboard motor drone that signalled the B-team's arrival.

It was to this sad scene that Brooks and three colleagues arrived. I had resolved that, with this new cohort, we would reverse course to revisit sites in the more northern rio Ventuari, in hopes that the rains had not yet arrived and fishing remained feasible.

Fresh and enthusiastic, the B-team immediately set to work fishing with hook and line, while I pulled up gillnets in preparation for an early morning departure.

Buoyed by new perspectives, we found our luck beginning to turn with several fascinating and valuable discoveries during the remaining weeks of our expedition, several of which I am still studying to this day. What made the trip truly exceptional though was the robust foundation it laid for an enduring collaboration that Brooks and I continue to explore 19 years later.

Brooks has since joined me on seven more expeditions to Ecuador, Peru, and Guyana. He is now a professor at New York University

Encountered at eye level, the intriguing and varied suckermouth armoured catfish invite empathy, themselves becoming spectators of human allure.

David Brooks's installation *Lonely Loricariidae* features ten aquaria, each with a different species of scientifically undescribed Amazonian catfish.



and an internationally acclaimed artist, having won the Rome Prize in 2020 and exhibited in over 12 countries. Recently, we collaborated on a remarkable art installation named *Lonely Loricariidae*, featured in the *Enduring Amazon* exhibition at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas.

Loricariidae is the scientific name for the suckermouth armoured catfish family, which I study. Hundreds of thousands of these fishes, dozens of which remain scientifically undescribed, are exported annually to supply the ornamental aquarium fish hobby.

The *Lonely Loricariidae* art installation engages this industry to source 10 wild-caught, scientifically undescribed loricariid species, each displayed in their own appropriately sized aquarium that is bare except for driftwood. The aquaria are scattered atop a set of aluminum sports bleachers, as isolated strangers might sit to watch a sports event. Encountered at eye level, the intriguing and varied fishes invite empathy, themselves

becoming spectators of human allure. The goal is that these Amazonian emissaries penetrate the digital cloak of modernity to highlight the inherent dignity of non-human species and their fragility in the face of myriad environmental threats.

Accompanied by panels of my scientific research, *Lonely Loricariidae* illustrates the transdisciplinary project I came to ROM to advance: deploying science and art to ennoble our non-human neighbours and inspire a more empathetic connection with our natural world. Collaborations are critical to that mission—as is support from readers like you.



Scan here to read the full story on Nathan Lujan's research and his work with David Brooks.

Dr. Nathan K. Lujan is Associate Curator of Fishes at ROM.

THE LOST LICHENS

How a mycology technician found more than 100 “lost” specimens—all over a century old

By Colin J. Fleming

IN A STAFF-ONLY AREA of ROM, 30 steps from the droning buzz of the fossils lab, is the mycological herbarium. Inside the fluorescent-lit room, hidden amid rows and rows of many-drawer cabinets, are approximately half a million fungal specimens: psychedelic mushrooms and jelly fungi and matted lichens that look like wet clumps of human hair. For as much as we know about the specimens, there is almost as much we don't. That's because about 30 percent of these specimens—particularly those that were donated—have not been properly catalogued, let alone photographed and digitized.

Why? Because the volume is too great. Plus, Simona Margaritescu—ROM's sole mycological technician—has plenty else to keep her busy, from preparing loans and DNA-barcoding specimens of interest to answering public inquiries and teaching TikTok about ergot, a famously spooky fungus some argue was responsible for the Salem Witch Trials.

But, on an overcast day in early November last year, Margaritescu was deep into the black hole of the collections, inventorying another set of lichens.

“Lichens are like a special kind of organism,” says Margaritescu, “because they are not

just fungi—they are a symbiosis, a partnership between fungi and various algae and cyanobacteria.

When she went to check the Miscellaneous cabinet to see if she'd missed anything, Margaritescu happened upon a box labelled “Macoun Lichens – Not in Census.”

John Macoun (1832–1920) was, in the words of a 1921 obituary in the *Journal of Mammology*, “one of the old school of naturalists who took the whole field of natural science for his province,” and, in Margaritescu's opinion, the “forefather of modern Canadian herbaria.” (“Not in Census” simply meant the specimens hadn't been entered as part of the collection, even in the antiquated ledgers.)

So naturally Margaritescu's interest was piqued. Then, she saw the packets—brittle brown envelopes, with their original labels inked in beautiful, looping calligraphy—dated to the 19th and 20th centuries.

The specimens inside were even more astounding.

“They looked like they were collected a few years ago,” Margaritescu says. “I was like, ‘Oh, no—they have to go in the collection.’”

Margaritescu enlisted the help of Eli Guan, a third-year University of Toronto

undergraduate student who volunteers in the mycology department. One by one, Guan photographed the old labels, then placed each lichen between a paper card and felt—necessary “pampering,” Margaritescu joked—before tucking them into acid-free paper packets affixed with new printed labels.

“I felt really bad in the beginning having to take scissors to [labels] older than anybody I know,” says Guan. “But then I got over it.”

While the Macoun specimens are an astonishing find, they don't have the detailed information technicians like Margaritescu expect from collectors today. Some of the labels only listed the year; others, in lieu of a particular place, simply said “Canada.”

Still, the specimens are valuable—a means to understand what was growing in Canada 150 years ago.

“My favourite phrase is that natural history collections are libraries of life,” Margaritescu says. “These collections represent a snapshot in time.”

Colin J. Fleming is the Senior Communications Creative Strategist at ROM.

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO 497
CRYPTOGAMIC HERBARIUM

Cladonia gracilis
v. *verticillata*
on rotten wood

LOCALITY *Ontario* DATE *June 17*
COLLECTOR *S. Macdonald* DET. BY



AUBREY BEARDSLEY

The illustrator-author's short but illustrious career established his name as one of the most important graphic artists of the late 19th century

By Jennifer Kinnaird

AUBREY BEARDSLEY (1872–1898) was born in the late 19th century—a time when society was beginning to question the rapid industrialization and capitalism that was reverberating across the world. New photomechanical reproduction techniques meant that Beardsley's work could now be easily reproduced and widely disseminated. This amplified Beardsley's exposure, with his name becoming synonymous with 1890s British art, decadence, and the Aesthetic movement.

Beardsley's 1894 illustrations for Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* are the true embodiment of English fin de siècle art. Initially influenced by the Pre-Raphaelites, his style was constantly evolving. He adopted aspects from diverse contemporaneous art movements and combined them with historical sources. Beardsley was influenced by Japanese art and the aesthetics of woodblock prints, hanging scroll paintings, erotic art, and the stylized patterns found on blue and white porcelain.

Nowhere can this influence be better seen than in the intricate drawings he created for *Salome*. In Plate V, *The Peacock Skirt*, he repeatedly utilizes the peacock motif popularized in the *Peacock Room* (1877) by James McNeil Whistler. The elongated, highly stylized, androgynous figures are clothed in contemporary Aesthetic costumes, while the sinuous curvilinear lines are a direct link to continental art nouveau. The use of a flat black pattern juxtaposed with asymmetrical compositions, with figures floating high on the picture plane in stylized

backgrounds, is a direct homage to the Japanese art Beardsley so admired. And he used this confluence of aesthetic modes to cultivate a distinctive graphic style—a new visual identity that truly was his own.

Often provoking controversy, Beardsley's work explored the fin de siècle's newly evolving ideas with illustrations of sexually empowered women, gender fluidity, and non-conformity.

In 1895, a year after *Salome* was published, Oscar Wilde was convicted and imprisoned for his love affair with Lord Alfred Douglas. Due to Beardsley's association with Wilde, he was dismissed from his prestigious position as the art director of *The Yellow Book* after protestors stormed its offices. At the height of his career, Beardsley fled to France, jobless and with few prospects for future commissions in London. Although he continued to work, he never received the same level of fame or status he had once held. At the age of 25, he succumbed to tuberculosis. Though Beardsley's career was short-lived, it established his name as one of the most important graphic artists of the late 19th century. His work persevered, setting new standards for graphic design and inspiring a new generation of artists who would go on to create the modern movement.



The Peacock Skirt
Plate V from *Salome*
by Oscar Wilde
1894
Aubrey Vincent
Beardsley
Lithograph printed
on woven paper



View this illustration
and more of Beardsley's
work online at
collections.rom.on.ca.

Jennifer Kinnaird is a Collection
Specialist for the European Collections in
the Department of Art & Culture.

Wild Cats

Quilts

OpenROM

Art & Fashion from Joseon

PART 2

IN THE COMPANY OF CATS

The felines that have
captivated and influenced
humans for millennia



By **Kat Eschner**





STALKING PREY, rolling in meadows, or simply watching the world, tail swishing—since prehistory, humans have been fascinated by cats of all sizes. These charismatic creatures have purred and roared their way into humanity's hearts, hearths, and arts, while never losing their signature style.

Throughout history, humans around the globe have maintained a relationship with cats, expressing it through art, stories, and decorative objects, often invoking the many ways that felines are unlike us.

Humans are social animals with bodies built for gathering all the elements of a diverse omnivorous diet. All cats, on the other hand, share a number of characteristics distinct from humans: they are obligate carnivores, meaning the vast majority of their diet must be animal tissues; they have loose and flexible limbs, ideal for capturing prey and for scaling trees; all (except the cheetah) have retractable claws; the vast majority are solitary and, excepting the lion, lack a strong social structure even when they do form groups for purposes like child rearing.

Humanity's ongoing fascination with these extraordinary creatures is evidenced in art and cultural objects found throughout history and prehistory. Some cultures have modelled their weapons after a tiger's claws, like the *bagh nakh* of India. Others sought to invoke for themselves the regal power of a cat, such as the historical leaders of China or Paraguay.

But wild cats, big and small, have come into increasing competition with human settlements over the centuries. Today, habitat loss and fragmentation is a key conservation risk for cats—as is hunting by humans.

Jenn Martin is a keeper at the Toronto Zoo who works with its snow leopards, Jita and Pemba. The snow leopard, like many other wild cats, is in danger of becoming extinct. One of its biggest threats is humans, including those who share its home range in mountainous parts of Asia. "Between human

encroachment and the lack of food available in some areas, the cats will enter villages and take livestock to sustain themselves. Farmers will then kill the cats in retaliation," Martin says.

Poaching is an even bigger threat. "An average of one snow leopard a day is poached and killed for its fur," she says. Similar obstacles are faced by many other wild cats. A booming black-market trade for the skins, claws, teeth, and innards of jaguars, tigers, and many other species testifies to the dark side of humanity's enduring fascination with the feline.

Nowhere is humanity's complex relationship with the *Felidae* family more strongly

represented than in the history of *Felis catus*, the house cat. Feline domestication was "a slow process that happened over time, not something that was fast," says Eva-Maria Geigl, a palaeogeneticist and lead researcher at the Institut Jacques-Monod in Paris. "It was probably most of the time not very directed by humans."

Geigl and her colleagues study the genetic history of human and domestic animal evolution. In a 2017 study, they examined the mitochondrial DNA of cats from as far back as the Neolithic to find that the domestic cat as we know it today is the result of a long,



Throughout history, humans around the globe have maintained a relationship with cats, which has been expressed through art and objects.

Standard-holder
in lion form
15th–mid 17th century
Moulded earthenware
with glaze

Opposite:
Bagh nakh
(tiger claws)
19th century
Wrought steel



slow process of humans and felines coming together.

In the Fertile Crescent region of the Middle East, during the Neolithic period, local cats from a subspecies of the African wildcat began to stay close to humans, who had started cultivating grain. The grain attracted rodents, thus the area had a ready source of food. Since humans, along with cats, had a shared aim in rodent reduction, nobody did much about their new, small, wildcat neighbours.

Over time, Geigl and her colleagues postulate, the least timid of the cats began to cultivate a closer relationship with local humans, and moved with them when they began to migrate. “They started to move to Africa and Europe,” says Geigl. Their new feline comrades went with them by land and sea: “We see these lineages all over the ancient world.”

Cats continued to associate with people because it suited both parties: humans benefited from cats ability to keep areas free of small, destructive rodents, while cats benefited from access to living spaces that were relatively warm and dry and had a ready food source.

Unlike dogs, who were domesticated much earlier, cats don’t actually share a lot of traits with humans, says Geigl, but the two species worked well together. “It is a commensal relationship,” she says. (Similar evidence has been found elsewhere, including in China, but in those places, humans and cats never got close enough to become domestic pals.)

The researchers only had limited genetic records to work from: samples of bone, skin, and hair from Africa, the Middle East, and Europe that had been painstakingly collected and sequenced by researchers since the early 1980s. But they also had evidence from art and from cultural objects testifying that humans and cats had become much closer over time.

As far back as 10,000 years ago, people in the Levant were crafting stone figurines of cats—and there’s some archaeological evidence they were kept as pets, including a 9,500-year-old burial site in Cyprus. Later, says Geigl, the evidence from art increases: “In the Minoan culture (3100–1100 BCE), you also see cat figurines.”

The richest source of early art and cultural objects dealing with the cat’s changing status was ancient Egypt, where they’re shown in carved ivory knives and wall carvings as far back as 2200 BCE. Images of cats hunting alongside humans in marshes are believed to be wild cats, dating as far back as the Middle Kingdom. Slowly, over time, art featuring cats in human settings, especially sitting under the chair of a woman, became commonplace. By around 1450 BCE, the cat appeared as a commonplace image.

“Wild cats are solitary animals and very fearsome,” Geigl says. “You would not have a cat under a chair unless there is something already changed in the behaviour of cats so that they coexist with humans.”



Pillow in tiger form
c. 1150–1234 CE
Moulded, slipped
stoneware with
iron, brown paint
and glaze

Stirrup spout
vessel in the form
of a seated cat
Made and used by
the Moche in Peru,
200–600 CE

Opposite:
Statuette of Sekhmet
From Egypt,
c. 945–715 BCE



Ancient Egyptian civilization, throughout its long span, was highly religious and considered animals to have sacred significance. Cats were portrayed as gods, including Sekhmet, a lion-headed goddess, and her son Maahes. Around 1000 BCE, the cult of Bastet began to gain prominence, and cats were bred by temples and turned into cat mummies.

“This was so popular that they needed millions of cats,” says Geigl. “There was a whole industry around it.” Her team was able to analyze a few samples from extant Egyptian cat mummies, finding that cats descended from the Egyptian cat spread far and fast

around the Mediterranean world, likely by sea. Domestic cats have flourished alongside humans ever since, enjoying a status as companion animals. Today, millions of domestic cats can be found around the globe, and different cultures have continued to make art and cultural objects examining our relationships with them. This relationship has its own dark side, however: the spread of domesticated cats has had significant impact on local animals, with billions of reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals killed by free-ranging outdoor cats around the globe each year, leading to growing movements to reshape how we treat our pets.

Whether it’s a growing awareness of our impact on the natural habitats of big cats, our efforts to understand smaller, more reclusive feral felines, or our ability to share resources with our domesticated neighbours, our relationship with cats is destined to continue evolving.



Wild Cats opens at ROM on June 15, 2024.
This exhibition was created by the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, France.

Kat Eschner is a freelance science and business journalist based in Toronto.





Northern Night (detail), 1955, designed by Ada B. Torrance, sewn by Torrance and members of Simcoe County Arts and Crafts Association, Orillia, Ontario. Cotton tabby textile, pieced, appliquéd, and embroidered.

QUILTS

Made in Canada

F

EXQUISITELY PATTERNED and meticulously stitched, quilts are visual repositories of past and present lives, holding interwoven legacies of home, family, and community. Opening this summer, *Quilts: Made in Canada*, is a ROM-original exhibition featuring stunning quilts dating from the 1850s to the present, selected from the collections at ROM.

On the surface, each quilt is a masterwork of colour, design, and production. Looking closer, each quilt tells a story—through its makers, its materials, where, how, and when it was made, and its intent. From those made of everyday cotton and wool for warmth and comfort, to striking creations made for special occasions and display, to community quilts reflecting specific projects and initiatives, each creation unlocks an exclusive story, revealing the shared history of those who created it. Over 20 quilts—many rarely before seen on public display—will be showcased in an open presentation that reveals each quilt's story, and invites a closer look.

Whether an experienced quilter, or someone interested in fibre arts, the exhibition is meant to draw visitors into quilts' timeless beauty of colour and composition, and the powerful stories they contain. *Quilts: Made in Canada* offers an important, engaging glimpse of treasures from a rare and important collection.

Quilts: Made in Canada opens June 29, 2024, and is free with general admission.

Exhibition Patron

Jeanne Timmins Costello Trust

Generously supported by the Royal Exhibitions Circle.



Quilts are repositories of past and present lives, holding interwoven legacies of home and family.

Left:
Quilt (detail), 1942–45
Kinu Murakami
(b. Japan 1883–d. Canada 1947)
New Denver Internment Camp,
British Columbia
Pieced cigarette silks
ROM 2023.33.1
Gift of Michael Murakami.

Centre:
Log cabin quilt (detail), 1890s
Frederica Matilda
Tompkins, East Florenceville,
New Brunswick
Cotton and wool
ROM 987.212.1
Gift of Mrs. Audrey L. Livingstone.

Right:
Appliqué quilt, “Wreath of flowers”
or “garden wreath” pattern (detail),
1865
Catherine Petit Gage
Fruitland, Ontario
Appliquéd and pieced cotton
ROM 967.168.2
Gift of Hattie I. and Charlotte Jones.







OPENROM UNVEILED

Josh Basseches,
ROM Director & CEO,
and Siamak Hariri,
Founding Partner
of Hariri Pontarini
Architects, on the
Museum's ambitious,
multi-year
transformation

By Colin J. Fleming



WHEN SIAMAK HARIRI walks into Josh Basseches's office, he claps him on the back like an old friend. Which, in fact, they have become while working together.

For seven years, the architect and Museum director have collaborated closely, hashing out design plans and discussing what it means to be a quintessential 21st-century museum.

In close collaboration with Basseches, Hariri and his firm, Hariri Pontarini Architects, restored the Queen's Park Weston Entrance, which opened to the public for the first time in more than a decade in 2017. Next came the Helga and Mike Schmidt Performance Terrace and the Reed Family Plaza in 2019—13,595 square feet of outdoor public space, anchored by landscaping and architectural design. While impressive simply as physical spaces, both these projects were driven by Basseches's larger vision for ROM: becoming even more open, outward facing, and inclusive.

This vision also drove ROM's newest project, spurring their most intense collaboration yet. Some months, Basseches was in the Hariri Pontarini Architects offices virtually every week.

"It's very unusual," Hariri said. "Mostly, with a museum, you listen, you draw, you design, you tweak it a little bit, and then you go."

But this multi-year collaboration was what Basseches called an "iterative process." And, in February, the fruits of that process were finally revealed: OpenROM, a sweeping, donor-funded transformation of the main floor into a thriving cultural and civic hub, which will build on the Museum's iconic architecture.

What will that look like, exactly? A wholly reconceptualized entrance at the corner of Bloor Street and Queen's Park—arguably the most important intersection in the city. There,

visitors will be greeted by a water feature that will wrap around the heritage facade, where friends gather and children play. In the winter, the water will turn to cracked ice, a nod to frozen Canadian lakes and landscapes.

West of the water feature, stairs will lead to a grand canopy of bronze, which will protect visitors from inclement weather. Below the canopy will be the Museum's new Bloor Street entrance—the future Hennick Entrance—featuring important works from the collection. Combined, these features will give visitors a sense not just of arrival but of wonder and awe. What's more, the glass entrance will allow pedestrians to see in and visitors to see out, better connecting the Museum to the neighbourhood.

Inside, the transformation will be equally impressive. Gone will be the stanchions and cash registers which currently greet visitors, replaced by an unobstructed vista deep into the Museum. A glance upward will reveal an oculus sliced into the ceiling, allowing a view of dinosaurs that lived millions of years ago. Hundreds of artworks, artifacts, and specimens will be displayed on the main floor, welcoming visitors and inspiring curiosity.

Two new galleries will be created on upper floors, and a giant lily-pad staircase will knit ROM's three levels together, improving access and offering overlooks that serve both as a stage and a platform where visitors can survey the Museum and get a hint of their journey to come.

The heart of OpenROM will be the Hennick Commons: a soaring interior space bathed with natural light creating a vibrant and accessible hub of learning, connection, and exchange. Here, the once-sloped floor will be levelled, transforming almost 20,000 square feet into programmable space for gathering, display, and performance. On quiet mornings, children will be able to lounge in beanbags on the floor, reading in a group or simply taking in the sights. On busy Saturday afternoons, the space will transform into a stage for music and dance. The Hennick Commons will also be home to a new café and the Forum, a space for everything from lectures to hands-on science programming and performances.

For both Basseches and Hariri, planning and designing OpenROM has been a career highlight. And after years of working behind the scenes, they were eager to discuss the project, their design philosophies, and the future of the Museum.

Josh, this project will be a boon to the public, but it's funded by donors like the Hennick family. Why is that important?

JOSH BASSECHES: Projects like this would not be possible without donors who see the potential and say, "I want to be a catalyst for making something new and exciting happen." While support from the province is crucial to keeping our doors open, it is private donors who put the extra fuel in the tank that

enables us to go beyond just being a good museum—to being a world-leading museum.

Siamak, in your 2017 TED Talk you opened with a story in which a security guard "runs his hand across the concrete wall" at the Yale Art Gallery—a "reaction of the heart" that "touched you to the core." How would you like people to react to OpenROM?

SIAMAK HARIRI: It's easy to do design programming and, frankly, to do budget. It's not easy to do emotion. And what you want is to raise this idea in people's minds that you're welcome. It's a feeling that when you walk in, this is your space. I can hang out here.

Museums belong to the general public. That's an amazing concept. And so, this space has to embrace this idea of diversity and inclusion. It can't be too highbrow. But it also can't speak down to the fact that this is one of the great museums. It's all of those things balanced together.

Josh, how would you like people to react?

JOSH BASSECHES: Part of what has allowed our project to be so successful is that Siamak and I see things very similarly. I want people to be in this space and, whether they're conscious of it or not, think, "This place makes me feel really good." There is amazing natural light and a sense of being in a remarkable space that gives you energy rather than taking it away, that inspires you to find out all the things the Museum has to offer.

We both feel that, from a heritage architectural perspective, the Weston Entrance and the Rotunda are exceptionally designed. As you watch anybody walk into them, there's that immediate moment—they look up; they look around; they've *arrived* someplace special. The goal now is to create a sense of inspiration, awe, and wonder as you come inside through the doors of the new Hennick Entrance.

OpenROM is not a net-new build. It's a reimagining of the Museum to reflect the evolving needs of today's audiences. What was it like working in this space?

SIAMAK HARIRI: From the beginning, Josh spoke about creating a physical heart at the centre of ROM. Which is now going to be known as the Hennick Commons.

There are a few things every great museum has. One of them is natural light. And so, we came up with the idea of placing a glass ceiling above the Hennick Commons. And then, you ensure you have all the good things that people need: an easy way to get around the Museum, good food, and lots and lots of programming, which we enable through the architecture. So it becomes a place for conversations, socializing, and things to happen.

We will literally open up those closed walls to certain galleries—structurally, surgically,



architecturally—so that you go, “Oh, my God! This one’s the gallery for dinos; that one’s the gallery for India.”

JOSH BASSECHES: The moment you enter the Museum, we want you to know that you’ve arrived at a place with exceptional works of art, culture, and nature. So part of our design is to bring important works from the

collection into the space that is OpenROM. That way, the main floor becomes even more dynamic—the nucleus of a truly innovative and inclusive 21st-century museum.

This conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

UNDERSTATED ELEGANCE

Fashion from the Joseon dynasty

By Vicki Kwon



From the Land of
*Morning Calm: Portrait
 of a Man* 고요한 아침의
 나라에서: 남자 초상
 c. 1921
 Elizabeth Keith
 (1887–1956)
 Scottish
 Woodblock print

Opposite:
 Man's hat (gat) 갓
 Early 1900s
 Maker once known
 Korea
 Lacquered horsehair
 and mesh crown, brim
 with silk gauze ties

IF YOU HAVE EVER WATCHED a Korean drama with the Joseon dynasty (1390–1910) as a historical backdrop, you might have noticed a scene in which a man wearing a black hat, called a *gat*, is waving a hand-held paper fan in front of his face, regardless of whether it is hot or cold. In doing so, he is showing off his style and social status as a rich, upper-class man who can afford expensive fashion items. If the illustration and calligraphy on the fan were done by a famous court artist, the wearer is showing off his cultural capital and celebrity status. If the *gat* is decorated with gems, such as jade or amber, its value is comparable to that of today's Patek Philippe watch.

Joseon, the dynasty preceding current-day Korea, took Neo-Confucianism as its political philosophy, encouraging people to pursue virtuous behaviours and a restrained lifestyle. The founders of Joseon believed that practising such values would support the formation of a united family, harmonious communities, and a peaceful state. Reflecting this ideology, cultural norms were closely intertwined to maintain social order.

The emphasis on restraint came to the fore again during the 17th century, when the sumptuary laws prevented people from using luxury goods. Recent studies, including one by Sooa Im McCormick in *Forces of Nature*, have covered the effect of climate change on the aesthetic shift from the luxurious culture of the Goryeo dynasty (918–1392) to the simplicity, restraint, and modesty of the Joseon dynasty. The Joseon dynasty overlapped with the global Little Ice Age, when limited availability of resources caused budget shortfalls for the government. As such, the Joseon court



and its literati officers passed several acts to regulate the art and fashion of the general populace, emphasizing modesty.

Yet Joseon society also saw many variations, especially in the fashions from the 17th century. According to Lee Talbot in *Dress History of Korea*, women's *jeogori* (tops) became tighter and shorter, although always reaching at least to the wearer's armpit. Talbot also tells of how *gache* (women's wigs), made of human hair, became more and more voluminous—to the extent that a “fashion victim” broke her neck on her wedding day due to the weight of her *gache*. By the late 17th century, the Joseon court started restricting the use of *gache* to royal weddings only, recommending that citizens adorn their hair with ribbons (*daenggi*), hairpins (*binyeo*), or small coronets (*jokduri*) instead.

Men also spent much effort on their hairdos. Taking good care of one's body was

practising the filial duty of Neo-Confucian teaching, as the body is inherited from one's parents. Joseon men thus kept their hair long, combing it up, twisting, tying it, and making a topknot called a *sangtu*. To keep the *sangtu* tidy, men wrapped their forehead and the back of their head with a mesh band called a *manggeon*. And they put a hat on it.

The *gat* was very expensive and time consuming to make. The wider the brim, the more luxurious the hat. To keep the *gat* safe, the wearers had to bend their backs when passing through doors or low ceilings and hold the brim when riding a horse. In the 17th century, the court banned extra-large brims. This luxurious and ostentatious fashion was against the court's emphasis on modesty. Instead, it was an expression of the lay people's desire to convey their personal characteristics and resist the social values imposed by the government.

The style of hat worn by men in the Joseon dynasty signalled a person's rank in the social hierarchy. The gat was a status symbol for the men in the upper and middle classes. The male elite decorated their gat straps flamboyantly to make the class distinction visible. Men lower in social stature wore *paeraengi*, hats made of bamboo stems in the shape of a gat. Tall and winged, *samo* were only worn by government officials when they were performing formal duties, such as attending meetings or ritual ceremonies at court. (Outside of court, these officials wore the gat.) All men, however, were permitted to wear a samo for their wedding ceremony.

The fashion trends of Joseon are captured in the folding screen *Scenes from the Cycle of Life*, which illustrates the ideal life of a Joseon nobleman. Divided into ten panels, from right to left, it shows scenes of a man's first birthday, marriage, state examination to be a government official, role as a government official, move up the career ladder, 60th wedding anniversary ceremony, and a procession celebrating his 60th anniversary of passing the state examination. In the image on right, the man is returning home after passing the state examination. In the foreground, he is shown riding a white horse and wearing a samo decorated with two flowering branches. Marching behind him are his friends, wearing large-brimmed gats and holding fans. Women adorned with wigs are climbing the roof and trees to look at the ceremony, which is led by musicians and dancers whose hats are decorated with peacock feathers.

Not everyone had the privilege of enjoying luxury, however, and these class differences are reflected in the attires of servants and people of lower classes. A servant in the fourth panel of *Scenes from the Cycle of Life* carries the nobleman's gat in the gat box on his back.

While restraint, modesty, and simplicity defined the aesthetic of the Joseon dynasty, the fashion of the time reveals individual desires, class hierarchies, and stylistic rebellion of the people against governmental regulations. ROM is presenting rotating displays of the art and fashion of Joseon in the Gallery of Korea, and this first rotating display is up in the gallery until September 2024. This most recent installation comments on the aesthetics and the fashion history of Joseon, introducing textiles, prints, paintings, and various objects from the Museum's Korean collection.

Detail of the third panel from the folding screen *Scenes from the Cycle of Life*
 평생도 심복병풍
 Artists once known
 Early 1900s
 Korea
 Ink and colours on silk
 wooden frame



Scan here to view all the panels from *Scenes from the Cycle of Life*.



Dr. Vicki Kwon is the Associate Curator, Korean Art & Culture at ROM.

Supporting ROM

ROMTravel

Object Highlight

PART 3

TRANSFORMATIVE PHILANTHROPY

How OpenROM invites an even more welcoming Museum experience



AS CHAIR of the ROM Board of Governors, I'm thrilled for the future of our institution. OpenROM, our ambitious plan to transform the Museum into a cultural and civic hub, marks a transformative moment in ROM's history that will make an impact for generations to come. The project is indebted to the collective efforts of many donors, volunteers, staff members, and ROM partners. We are excited about welcoming new visitors from our diverse and thriving city and millions of out-of-town visitors.

With incredible architectural enhancements in service of a more inviting and vibrant environment, OpenROM will welcome more households that aren't able to enjoy paid attendance. Pilot tests like Third Tuesday Nights Free at the Museum have drawn significant new attendees without impacting ROM's paid visitorship, proving that free civic public space with compelling programming unlocks a vast new audience for ROM. OpenROM, with its Free Main Floor, will also tap into Toronto's thriving tourism market, giving tourists

a more compelling stop on their city itineraries many of the participants on these tours will buy tickets and shop at ROM. These two new sources of visitors will increase ROM's standing in the global list of top museums, fulfill our Ontario provincial mandate to serve all constituents, and further strengthen ROM's financial future.

At the heart of OpenROM is our commitment to creating a vibrant and dynamic space that shares stories that need to be told, celebrates our differences, fosters creativity, and sparks curiosity. By expanding our facilities and enhancing our programming, we aim to create an environment where every visitor feels welcome and can make meaningful connections.

We are deeply grateful to the The Jay & Barbara Hennick Family Foundation, which catalyzed OpenROM with a landmark gift of \$50 million. As we move forward, this vision will continue to be realized through the support and generosity of ROM's community. We want to partner with individuals like you, who share our passion for innovation, excellence, and community engagement.

By joining us on this transformative journey, you have the opportunity to build important cultural infrastructure for our city and the world.

Your support will not only help us realize our ambitious goals, but it will also ensure that ROM remains a beacon of excellence and a source of inspiration for generations to come. Whether you choose to contribute financially, volunteer your time, or simply spread the word about our cause, your involvement is invaluable and deeply appreciated. Our Philanthropy team is waiting to connect with you by phone or email.

Join us in helping people understand the past, make sense of the present, and come together to shape a better future.

To explore the many ways to support ROM, please visit rom.ca/support, call 416.586.0701 or email donations@rom.on.ca.

Jeff Willner is the Chair of the ROM Board of Governors.

LIVES & LEGACIES: A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

THE HOLOCENE EPOCH began roughly 11,700 years ago, following the end of the last ice age. And during that time, the Earth remained pretty stable—at least in terms of geology.

But the extreme acceleration of human activity over the last century has brought about some intense and undeniable climate changes. Have we entered the long-debated Anthropocene Epoch?

Francine McCarthy is an earth sciences professor and micropalaeontologist at Brock University and a research associate at ROM. She led a team of scientists, including ROM experts, seeking to answer this very question.

The team was responsible for the selection of Crawford Lake, Ontario, as the “golden spike” candidate marking the dawn of the proposed Anthropocene. The lake’s annually layered sediments record a rapid increase in fossil fuel combustion in the mid-20th century.

The culmination of Francine’s work with Crawford Lake coincided with the updating of her will, and the rapidly changing planet was naturally on her mind.

“I was spending more time thinking about the state of our planet than I ever had before,” says Francine. “I knew that through my legacy, I wanted to communicate the urgency of climate action, and it struck me that ROM’s Climate Change Initiative could make the biggest impact. With its wide-ranging collections and programming, ROM is uniquely positioned to show how climate change affects all aspects of our lives and to reach the largest possible audience—people of all ages, backgrounds, and interests.

“The appointment of Soren Brothers as ROM’s inaugural Allan and Helaine Shiff Curator of Climate Change is what eventually sealed the deal,” adds Francine. The position is the first of its kind at a major museum. “With such focus being given to its climate initiative, ROM is developing meaningful ways to reach people and create a positive effect on our planet’s future.”

By naming ROM as the sole beneficiary of her life insurance and through an additional bequest in her will, Francine joined the Currelly Legacy Society,

an insightful group of donors looking to ensure the future of the Museum—and the planet. Members enjoy special benefits, exclusive events, and increased access to the Museum and its many transformative initiatives.

A panel of stratigraphers recently voted against recognizing the start of a new epoch, but the conversations about the Anthropocene continue. The work of Francine and her team shows, that humanity’s impact has been irrefutable.

“The Crawford Lake sediments present powerful evidence regarding the relationship between *Homo sapiens* and the planet we inhabit,” writes Soren for *The Conversation*. “Yet, perhaps the most important lesson here is that the relationship between people and planet is not predetermined, but shaped by people’s choices and values.”

It is this conviction that propels ROM’s Climate Change Initiative and that gives Francine hope for our future.

To learn more about the impact you can make by leaving a legacy at ROM, contact janicec@rom.on.ca.



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We create chemistry

IGNITING CURIOSITY AND WONDER

AS ONE OF CANADA'S largest cross-curricular educational institutions, ROM nurtures the potential of more than 150,000 children every year—at the Museum and beyond—thanks to the philanthropy of visionary donors. In many ways, ROM empowers youth to expand their horizons and reach new heights—from exploring exhibitions and galleries to developing digital literacy skills for the future.

Last school year, ROM's School Visits Program enabled 7,533 students to get out of the classroom and engage with the Museum's world-class collections and knowledgeable educators on site—at no cost to schools or families. Of that group, 285 classes received transportation subsidies. Eleven unique programs provided an interdisciplinary approach to art, culture, and nature, inviting young learners to expand their world view and examine complex ideas. Tailored to align with grade-specific curricula, these programs complemented classroom learning while also introducing new ideas and perspectives.

ROM's impact on students also extends beyond the walls of the Museum through pioneering programs like Hack the ROM, which

builds students' digital literacy while introducing Indigenous ways of being, doing, and knowing. This innovative initiative has been an undeniable success, with nearly 2,000 visits last year featuring instruction on coding and programming distinctive games. Bringing together Indigenous Museum Educators, volunteer mentors, and engaged schoolchildren provides an exceptional and unique experience for all those involved.

When school is out, ROM's hugely popular Summer Club engages over 12,000 young campers, sparking curiosity and igniting a joy of learning that stays with them indefinitely. As part of its commitment to becoming an even more open and accessible museum for the 21st century, ROM also offers "camper-ship bursaries" to ensure that many children have the opportunity to benefit from these enriching experiences and create lasting memories—regardless of socio-economic background, disability, or health challenges.

ROM is deeply grateful to its Education Partners, who enable these transformative learning experiences for young visitors to the Museum.



Thanks to ROM's Education Partners:

BARRICK

The Bennett Family Foundation

J.P. Bickell Foundation

Philip and Berthe Morton Foundation

The Rossy Foundation



ROM Education Programs are also supported by the Nancy E.A. Main Fund and the Edith Maxine Galbraith Fund.

FLEMISH MASTERPIECE

Amsterdam, Bruges, and Beyond by Boat



May 1 to 12, 2025

Enjoy spring in the Low Countries with a delightful getaway that includes cities, towns, gardens, markets, museums, and local food. See famous art masterpieces and the locations where Vermeer, Bruegel, and van Gogh painted them, such as Vermeer's Delft and Bruegel's Antwerp. Encounter flower markets and gardens at their peak, and navigate rural waterways in a luxury river boat. Local experts, delicious food, art treasures, fields of flowers, and Flemish hospitality create a unique trip from which a lifetime of memories are made.



For more information, contact ROMTravel at travel@rom.on.ca or 416.586.8034.

ROMWALKS

Discover Toronto with ROMWalks, a collection of guided walking tours that take participants on a unique journey of urban discovery. Offered each year from May to October, rain or shine, the walks combine the excitement of exploring diverse and vibrant neighbourhoods with the expertise of knowledgeable guides and the adventure of learning. Free, Plus, and Private Group ROMWalks are available to the general public. Member Exclusive ROMWalks are also available to ROM Members. Free walks are scheduled on Sundays at 2 p.m. and Wednesdays at 6 p.m. Simply turn up at a walk's starting point and look for the ROMWalks umbrella.



Free ROMWalks

ROMWalks starts its 2024 season with the first Free walk on Sunday, May 5. Routes new to the Free walks roster this year are Cabbagetown North, Grange, and Monuments in Memory: Queen's Park. Additional neighbourhoods include the Annex West, King Street East, Mt. Pleasant, Riverdale, Rosedale, and Sacred Stones & Steeples.

Member Exclusive Walks

On select days throughout the year, ROM Members have the opportunity to participate in Member-only ROMWalks, which encompass the diverse aspects of Toronto's vibrant neighbourhoods. Members will be notified through Member newsletters when these exclusive walks are open for registration. Member Exclusive Walks are limited to small groups to ensure your enjoyment, and registration is required.

ROMWalks Plus

ROMWalks Plus are small-size group walks designed to introduce newly developed itineraries. Cost is \$10 per person, and pre-registration is required. Park Lawn Cemetery and Riverside are the new Plus walks available this season.



Many of our popular walks can be flexibly arranged as a private walk, perfect for family, social groups, and business groups; email romwalks@rom.on.ca for more information.

ROMBUS

This unique ROM program offers day trips of historic, cultural, natural, or architectural interest in Toronto and the surrounding areas. Each adventure features local specialists whose expertise and resources make the trip come alive. And every tour includes a delicious lunch at a local destination. ROMBus is on the road again in 2024. Get a glimpse into the Earth's past at Crawford Lake, one of the world's most unique bodies of water. Tour three historic places of worship, featuring buildings that have been architecturally refurbished for their new congregations. Visit the Holland Marsh, a source of Ontario's fresh produce. Discover the artistic side of Orangeville through its public art gallery and Christmas lights displays, and enjoy Theatre Orangeville's hilarious pantomime. Hop on the bus!



To find out more about upcoming ROMBus trips, call 416.586.5797 or visit rom.on.ca/en/whats-on/rombus.

SACRED ANIMALS

A closer look at the cat goddess Bastet

ANCIENT EGYPTIANS revered cats as sacred animals who brought good luck. Animals were thought of as reincarnations of deities and as a result were honoured both in households and temples. Bastet is one of the earliest known Egyptian deities, recognized both as avenger and protector. Early depictions of Bastet show her as a fierce lioness, but over the course of time, she started being portrayed more and more in the form of a domesticated cat. This change in appearance began during the Middle Kingdom, and signalled an increased worship of cats. Bastet was seen more as a guardian who kept humans safe from predators.

Here, Bastet is seen as a cat-headed woman in a patterned sheath. In her right hand, she holds a sistrum (a musical instrument) and on her left, an aegis (a sort of magically protective shield). There appears to be a small basket hung over her left arm.

Statuette of
standing cat, Bastet
c. 664–332 BCE
Undetermined site,
Egypt
Bronze cast

Bastet can be seen on display at the *Wild Cats* exhibition, which opens on June 15, 2024.



CANADA'S LEADING MUSEUM, REIMAGINED.



A south-facing view of the future Hennick Commons.

Introducing OpenROM

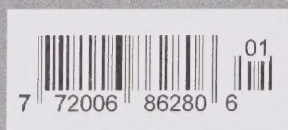
A dramatic architectural transformation, inspired by our mission to become an even more dynamic cultural and civic hub for all—catalyzed by a \$50-million gift from the Hennick Family Foundation.

Once complete, visitors can look forward to a beautiful new Bloor Street entrance that links to the neighbourhood; ongoing programming and live performances; more gallery space; and a sweeping, sunlit main floor—free for everyone to enjoy.

Join Us
openROM.ca

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Kang-Mei Wang
ROM-100 Queen's Park
Toronto ON M5S 2C6

\$5.95 CAN
Display until September 30, 2024



ROM